



Mission

The Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates investor-owned public utilities operating in Missouri. The PSC has the statutory responsibility for ensuring that customers receive adequate amounts of safely delivered and reasonably priced utility services at rates that will provide the companies' shareholders with the opportunity to earn a reasonable return on their investment. The PSC must balance a variety of often competing private interests to ensure the overall public interest.

Jurisdiction and Goals

The Missouri Public Service Commission was created in 1913 by the Public Service Commission Law, now Chapter 386 of the Missouri Revised Statutes. Today, the PSC regulates over 1,000 investor-owned electric, natural gas, telephone, and water and sewer utilities. In addition, the PSC regulates the state's 46 rural electric cooperatives and 42 municipally-owned natural gas utilities for operational safety. The PSC also regulates the manufacturers and dealers of manufactured homes and modular units.

The PSC also oversees service territory issues involving investor-owned electric utilities, rural electric cooperatives and municipally-owned electric utilities as well as investor-owned water and sewer utilities and public water supply districts. Under federal law, the PSC acts as a mediator and arbitrator of local telephone service disputes regarding interconnection agreements.

Virtually every Missouri citizen receives some form of utility service from an investor-owned public utility company. Utility services and infrastructure are essential to the economy of Missouri. They provide heating and cooling during extreme temperatures. They offer access to emergency services and vital information systems. They provide safe drinking water and assure the environmentally sound disposal of wastewater. Because utilities fulfill these essential needs, the PSC must assure the ratepaying public that quality services



PSC Commissioners meet twice weekly in agenda sessions--open to the public--to discuss, consider evidence and vote on pending utility cases.

will be available on a nondiscriminatory basis at just and reasonable rates.

Commissioners

The PSC consists of five commissioners who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Missouri Senate. The Governor designates one member as the Chair who serves in that capacity at the pleasure of the Governor.

Commissioners are appointed to six-year terms. These terms are staggered so that no more than two terms expire in any given year.

The PSC is both quasi-judicial and quasi-legislative. The PSC is responsible for deciding cases brought before it and for the promulgation of administrative rules and their enforcement. Many of the PSC's duties are performed by conducting hearings in contested cases, which by statute must be transcribed by a court reporter. Hearings are conducted in a trial-like setting using evidentiary standards under the

Missouri Administrative Procedures Act. The PSC must render decisions in a timely manner to afford all parties procedural and substantive due process, and comply with statutory time limits.

The PSC Staff

The Commission is assisted by a staff of professionals in the fields of accounting, consumer affairs, economics, engineering, finance, law and management. Duties range from helping individual consumers with complaints to investigating multi-million dollar utility rate requests.

The Staff participates as a party in all cases before the PSC. It conducts audits of the books and records of utilities and makes recommendations to the PSC as to what type of rate increase, if any, should be granted. PSC Staff recommendations, like those filed by other parties to a proceeding, are evaluated by the Commissioners in reaching a decision in a complaint case or rate case. The PSC has established standards for safety and quality of service to which companies must adhere. Routine and special investigations of utilities are conducted by the PSC Staff to ensure compliance.

Legislation

In 2004, the General Assembly enacted and the Governor signed new legislation relating to manufactured housing. SCS/SB 1096 allows the Commission to comply with provisions in Title VI of P.L. 106-569, the American Homeownership and Economic Opportunity Act of 2000.

The bill requires the Commission to license manufactured home installers, inspect home installations, adopt installation standards and administer a process to resolve disputes arising among installers, dealers and manufacturers. It provides for penalties

and authorizes fees and rulemaking. It *does not* apply to modular units. States must comply with this federal mandate by December 27, 2005.

The Governor also signed SCS/SB 878, relating to natural gas aggregation tariffs. Sec. 393.310, RSMo requires Commission-regulated natural gas companies to implement tariffs that allow public and private school districts to aggregate their natural gas purchases through third parties.

This was enacted as an experimental approach in 2002. The new act extends the effective date of the section for two years from June 30, 2005 to June 30, 2007. Tariffs in effect as of August 28, 2004 also shall extend until June 30, 2007. (Identical provisions were enacted in CCS/HS/HCS/SS/SCS/SB 968 & SCS/SB 969, relating to education.)

EFIS System Receives National Recognition

The Public Service Commission's Electronic Filing and Information System (EFIS) received two awards in 2004.

In March 2004, the Workflow Management Coalition and Workflow and Reengineering International Association honored the Commission with its North America Gold Award for innovation and excellence in workflow implementations. This award recognizes organizations that have excelled in the implementation of innovative solutions to meet strategic business objectives.

In September 2004, the Commission received the Digital Government-Government to Business Award from the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO). This award recognizes the Commission's efforts to foster innovative, timesaving, cost-effective transactions between government and business.

Public Information and Education Department

The Public Information and Education Department provides educational materials to consumers and information on utility regulation to members of the news media.

As part of its function, the Public Information and Education Department issues press releases on Commission decisions and provides detailed information sheets that are used at local public hearings conducted throughout Missouri.

During the past fiscal year, the Public Information and Education Department expanded its catalog of consumer fact sheets designed to provide information to ratepayers. The department began its third year of publishing a quarterly newsletter that provides utility-related information pieces for consumers.

The department also worked with the Information Services staff to redesign the PSC website to make information easier to access. An “i” icon was added to the PSC website. This provides quick links to consumer-related information. The department provides key support during local public hearings by facilitating an open question-and-answer session prior to the actual local public hearing to give consumers the opportunity to ask questions about a rate case before the Commission.



As part of the local public hearing process, the Public Information and Education Department facilitates a question and answer session. Photo courtesy of the Mexico Ledger.

The Public Information and Education Department also operates a list service, which allows the media and consumers to get press releases and other consumer information electronically as soon as they are issued.

Each year, the Public Information and Education Department coordinates the Public Service Commission booth at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia. The booth gives consumers from across the state an opportunity to speak one-on-one with PSC Staff about any utility questions and/or problems.

As part of its public awareness program, the Public Information and Education Department visits local schools, talking to students about how to be safe around electricity.